



## Common Purslane

### DID YOU KNOW?

Common purslane is a weed in gardens and farm fields throughout much of the world. But for hundreds of years, many people have also used it as a vegetable and a medicine.

I use common purslane to thicken stew.

### ORIGINS

No one knows for sure where common purslane originally came from. Many botanists believe it is native to the desert in North Africa. Its fleshy stems and leaves help it to thrive in dry desert soil.



### THE COMMON PURSLANE PLANT

Common purslane is an annual.



The small yellow flowers open in the morning sun.

The thick red stems grow out from a central root. They grow along the ground, forming a mat. The stems are smooth, round, and filled with sap.



The thick rounded leaves contain sap. They are usually grouped at the ends of branches.



seed

The seeds are in tiny pods. The lids on the pods open when the seeds inside are ripe.

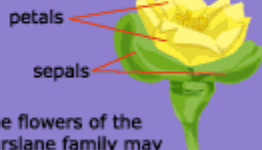


seed pod

### CLASSIFYING COMMON PURSLANE

#### FAMILY

Portulacaceae  
(purslane family)



The flowers of the purslane family may have several petals, but only 2 green sepals under the petals.

#### GENUS

*Portulaca*

In Latin, this means "little door," which refers to the door-like opening of the seed pods.



common purslane



*Portulaca grandiflora*



#### SPECIES

*oleracea*

In Latin, this means "edible."

### FRIEND . . .

Common purslane can be eaten raw in salads or it can be cooked like spinach. It is very high in Omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins A and C.

I can pull up this purslane and use it in a salad...



### . . .OR FOE?

... but I won't leave any cut stems on the ground because they can root and grow.



Common purslane plants can quickly take over a farm field or garden. Their leaves and stems are full of stored water, so the plants can survive even the worst dry periods. Each common purslane plant can produce thousands of seeds. Broken bits of stems or leaves can also take root and grow. Within a few weeks of sprouting, a plant can make ripe seeds.